

As he moves on to the next stage of his career, Bill can be proud of his service at the White House. The son of a marine, Bill loves his country and has served it well. Laura and I have come to know Bill's wife, Julie, and their daughters Grace, Maisie, and Lucy, and we wish Bill and his family all the best.

I am pleased to announce that Bill's deputy, Marc Thiessen, will succeed him as Assistant to the President for Speechwriting. Marc has done superb work in the speechwriting office for more than 3 years. Before coming to the White House, he served as chief speechwriter to Secretary Rumsfeld. Marc is a talented writer and experienced communicator who will do an outstanding job in his new position. I look forward to continuing to work with him.

Statement on the Formation of the National Council of the Damascus Declaration

December 14, 2007

I applaud the recent formation of the national council of the Damascus Declaration in Damascus, Syria. The brave men and women who formed this council reflect the desires of the majority of Syrian people to live in freedom, democracy, and peace, both at home and alongside their neighbors in the region.

The Syrian regime continues to hold hundreds of prisoners of conscience and has arrested more than 30 national council members in the past few days. All those detained should be released immediately.

The Syrian regime continues to deny its citizens fundamental human rights, including freedom of expression, freedom of movement, and the right to elect a representative government responsive to their needs. The formation of the national council is an encouraging sign to all people who support freedom and democracy. We support the national council's principles of nonviolent struggle and open membership to all the people of Syria who believe the time has come for change.

Memorandum on Waiver of Reimbursement Under the U.N. Participation Act to Support UNAMID Efforts in Darfur

December 14, 2007

Presidential Determination No. 2008-7

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Waiver of Reimbursement Under the U.N. Participation Act to Support UNAMID Efforts in Darfur

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including section 10(d)(1) of the United Nations Participation Act of 1945, as amended (22 U.S.C. 287e-2(d)(1)), I hereby determine that transfer to the United Nations/African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) of camps and other items furnished as assistance for the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) and assistance required to preserve continuity of functions during the immediate transition from AMIS to UNAMID without reimbursement from the United Nations is important to the security interests of the United States.

You are authorized and directed to report this determination to the Congress and to arrange for its publication in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Deployments of United States Combat-Equipped Armed Forces Around the World

December 14, 2007

Dear Madam Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I am providing this supplemental consolidated report, prepared by my Administration and consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93-148), as part of my efforts to keep the Congress informed about deployments of U.S. combat-equipped Armed Forces around the world. This supplemental report covers operations in support of the war on terror and Kosovo.